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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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BRIEFING PAPER

Bolivia

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~~When a bloody coup in July~~ 1980 prevented Bolivia's constitutionally-elected president from assuming office, we suspended or terminated most of our aid and withdrew our ambassador from La Paz. Under Garcia Meza, the Bolivian government became known for its links to the rapidly-expanding cocaine traffic, its human rights abuses and its corruption and incompetence in managing the economy.

In September 1981 General Celso Torrelio was declared president, but many critics regarded him as simply a continuation of the discredited Garcia Meza regime. We made clear to Torrelio that a full normalization of relations depended on GOB progress in four areas of concern to us - control of narcotics trafficking, prevention of human rights abuses, responsible management of the economy and a return to constitutional democracy. Based on the Torrelio government's public declarations of its intention to make progress in these areas and some positive steps taken, we returned a U.S. ambassador to La Paz. However, we have stated that further concrete actions in the areas of concern to us - particularly narcotics control and respect for human rights - will be necessary before we consider resuming our suspended aid.

We continue to regard President Torrelio as the best prospect for advancing U.S. interests in Bolivia.

Narcotics Control

Efforts to control Bolivian narcotics trafficking are hindered by the economic and political influence of the major traffickers and the pervasiveness of coca cultivation. Nevertheless, the GOB has facilitated the return to the U.S. of two Bolivians who were indicted in Miami for narcotics trafficking, completed a census of coca production and promulgated a new narcotics law. The new law is weak in some areas but during a recent

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visit by Assistant Secretary DiCarlo the Bolivians promised to make appropriate changes. To the best of our knowledge, the previously-existing complicity of senior members of the government in trafficking has ceased. The GOB has committed itself to a number of anti-narcotics measures, but we are waiting for positive action in such areas as prosecution of officials involved in trafficking, destruction of coca cultivations and interdiction of illicit coca leaf traffic. Once we see action in these areas, we anticipate entering into joint anti-narcotics programs of some magnitude, assuming the necessary funds can be located.

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BOLIVIA

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